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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the establishment of a connection between cognitive concepts and knowledge acquired through English-as-a-Second-Language teaching and learning. Modern thinking focuses on effective application of common global knowledge and language skills appropriate for culturally diverse students. The article suggests that a cognitive conceptual approach to language learning gives students the responsibility to explore the both language and themselves, as well as their surroundings in order to work cooperatively with peers and teachers. Teaching culture-specific differences may have far-reaching consequences, because it can lead to self-aware, environmentally-aware relationships which may increase students' awareness of intellectual issues. Successful intellectual communication becomes increasingly important as it improves on access to high quality international experiences. (SM)

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COGNITIVE CONCEPTS AND CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

The article deals with establishing a connection between cognitive concepts and the knowledge acquired through English teaching/learning as a foreign language. The focus of modern thinking is on effective application of common global knowledge and language skills appropriate for culturally divergent students. Teaching culture specific differences may have far-reaching consequences since it might lead to self-cognizing, environment-cognizing relationships, which may increase students' awareness of intellectual issues. Successful intellectual communication becomes more important than ever as it improves an access to high quality international experiences.

The link between cross-cultural awareness and cognitive concept learning is based on the assumption that any verbal sign or word is a result of the analogical nature of human conceptualization. Since our own conceptual system in terms of which we think and act must be and is actually metaphorical, simple concepts or word-metaphors always reveal something fresh and esoteric, stimulating imagination and energy. A cognitive concept designates a unified idea of dynamic educational process, concerning itself with both cognitive and affective realms (the intelligences and the emotions) of the human beings, pointing out that one does not exist without the other. Concepts are born to provide any cognitive activity and are expressed by words, but they are never equal. The relations between the concept and word are therefore very complicated. Cognition of the world is performed in quantum computing and is expressed in different meanings simultaneously by one and the same word-concept.

Admittedly, cognitive conceptual approach to language learning is the approach that basically gives the students responsibility to discover about the language and themselves as well and outer surroundings in order to co-operate not only with their peers but teachers too. Since the teacher is a guide for the students therefore he/she becomes a constant learner of what the learners need.

My viewpoint has grown out of an attempt to grasp needs analysis of the 21st century student who has an easy access to Internet website, where facts and figures are viable. But he/she is looking

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forward to getting more sophisticated emotional aesthetic information that the teacher is expected to share with. Alarmingly, it has been noticed rapid boosting of information volume at the expense of emotional and spiritual development of an individual. Nowadays the problem of realignment of education system is virtually addressed to thorough reshaping the paradigm of cultural didactics; ultimately, the major question at this point should be "how can we better prepare learners for the changing worlds of work and citizenship?" instead of "how do I improve my teaching?"

Our learners should become global citizens, which means that they are getting ready for future self-disciplined and self-organized way of life. This concept is very expressively marked by XII century Georgian poet Shota Rustveli in his seminal work "A Man in Panther's Skin": *We are only taught to be favored to join the heavenly order of orders.* (Translated by L.J.) Consequently he means space order and as any culture is order the main goal of education should be preparing young generation for cosmic order. This order is attained by God's pure word. Word being the cornerstone, in which the whole structure is joined together, grow into a harmonious text, in which the author and the reader are also built in together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit.

The most convincing contribution to the above mentioned questions, comes from the area of cognitive linguistics. Since language teaching is now an interdisciplinary activity, it contains within it an indispensable component of general linguistics. It has made us aware that the essence of language is not form or structure as emphasized by both structuralism and generative grammar schools. It lies closer to the heart of semantics. Most of the messages (when interpreting a text) are synthesized in one word. Any word, which is considered to be potentially pragmatic, means communication or textualization. It must carry certain messages that are easily recognized by the receiver. No matter how small a verbal sign is, it is the functional awareness that counts, not necessarily the volume. This genuine lingo-stylistic processing with unpredictable results is a challenging task for students who need some linguistic efforts to elucidate the subliminal, conceptual information from the text.

My students are instructed to master effective teaching methods that provide the opportunity to learn and fine-tune cognitive-concepts that are linked to keywords that are necessary in interpreting texts. The procedure of the seminal analysis of the text challenges students to pick out learning techniques that are best suited to learning language that is relative to their own cultural standpoint.

A good example for culture-specific differences can be traced in Georgian word "cross", which has negative connotation for many cultures while in Georgian it has positive understanding. Compare in English: to double cross, on the cross, a cross to bear, to cross over the other side, etc. But in Georgian we have a contrary concept.

A snippet from Georgian hagiography about St Nino (who is responsible for introducing Georgians to Christianity in IV Century) made a cross out of clippings of grape vines that would otherwise be discarded, using her own hair to bind the vines together in the form of a cross. Allegorically, this combination of materials symbolizes that the unwanted vines were likened to pagans - lifeless to Chistiandom. When we look closer to the text, splitting it into smaller segments and analyzing both immediate and distant distributions of the word in the text, it's retrospective and prospective content links lead to a new understanding. We present the Georgian text in the original with corresponding translation in English: "xolo nino daSTa da warmoemarTa mTaTa kerZo CrdiloisaTa da movida mdinaresa mtkuarsa, mohyva da movida mcxeTad qalaqsa didsa mefeTa sajdomelsa. da iyo sam wel egreT, ilocvida farulad adgilsa erTsa Seburvilsa brZamliTa mayulisaiTa. da Seqmna saxei juarisai, nasxlevisai, da mun daadgra da ilocvida. da adgili igi iyo zRudesa garsgan. xolo maT mayualTa adgili ars zemoisa eklesiis sakurTxevlisa adgili. da meoTxesa welsa iwyo Tqumad qriste RmerTi da Sjuli: "da me vpove cTomasa Sina friadsa, Crdiloisa queyanai da meequsesa welsa arwmuna colsa mefisasa nanas, (sensa Sina) missa. da meSvidesa welsa mefesa arwmuna saswauliTa qristesmieriTa. da mwrafl aRaSena eklesiai quemoi samoTxesa Sina, da sueti igi iyo Zelisai romeli TviT aRemarTa".

Nino made for the North along the river Mtkvari and approached a big royal city (capital) Mtskheta. She stayed there for three years praying secretly on a place overgrown with blackberry bushes and made a cross-like symbol out of cuttings of grapevines and kept on praying there – outside of the city walls, which later became the place of alter. And during the fourth year she started preaching the precepts of Jesus Christ: "I found pagan people astray in the north of the country". A year later she convinced and converted the wife of the king – Queen Nana (while she was ill at ease). The very seventh year she succeeded to convince the King himself with miracles by Christ and built rapidly a church down below the place, the column of which had risen by itself. (translated by L.J.)

"Cross" is not a sign of death for Georgians but it has been changed into a symbol of restoration, renewal, and born again soul. The concept of *unwanted vine cuttings* or *waste* came to be again

useful and full of life. This life-giving concept of the vine is still sacramental for Georgian culture. Georgian language has preserved this meaning in positive set expressions: jvari gweria (protected from evil eye), jvriswera (wedding), pirjvaris gadasaxva (to cross oneself before any emergency).

Consequently, this cognitive concept is reflective by showing an access to content, featuring culture-specific connotations. It is so-called cultural dialogue between different generations, different cultures and nations.

Another example of cognitive concept learning is illustrated in English word "derby" in American and English cultures. Two different pronunciations: English [da:bi] and US [de:bi] has several meanings: 1. Annual horse races run at Epsom, 2. Any of annual races; 3. Any important sporting contest: a local derby, 4. Derby Hat (US bowler). Shifting in meanings involves the whole history of two cultures. The original derby is an annual horse race at Epsom Downs, England and the Kentucky Derby [Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky]. However, it is nowhere near the town or county of Derby in north central England; it is a racetrack in Surrey, southwest of London. The "derby" derived its name not from its location, but from the title of its founder Edward Stanley, the twelfth Earl of Derby, who established the race in 1780. Derby then became the term for a number of prominent horse races, usually restricted to three-year olds, and today it has come to mean any race or contest open to all comers or to a special category of contestants. In the US in 1880 the name "derby" was applied to a stiff felt hat with a dome-shaped crown and a narrow brim. This might be connected again with races when spectators from high and upper middle classes are expected to wear special hats. Many special occasions in England are still highlighted with the wearing of unique and trendy hats. Moreover, "Derby Parties" as in Kentucky became the gathering place for the rich and famous, especially those in well-placed positions in government to interact in an annual event.

Understanding the basic concepts of cultural comparison we have to develop appropriate learning materials for our multicultural audiences, which sometimes consists not only of Orthodox Christians or Catholics, but also of Muslims and Jews. Cross-cultural meanings of words becomes a problem for translators which is frequently solved in accordance with the order and demands made by the society's mindsets or mode of thought, leading sometimes to unclear, culturally inappropriate or even absurd outcomes. A good example of this is the English' word "gay", which has traditionally meant "happy" and "cheerful", but within the last twenty years or so "gay" in American English has come to designate homosexuals. Seemingly, it should have started with American

writer Gertrud Stein, who first used this word in one of her short stories in this shifted meaning. She uses the word in such a meaningful context repeatedly over and over again, that finally the reader understands the larger implication of the meaning-shift in the concept of "happiness" (which is a complete shift in the application of the original concept).

Learning and teaching English introduces us into a world of cognitive ideas and exciting discoveries. Learning of foreign concepts makes relaxing atmosphere in class from global perspective because dominant paradigm in teaching and learning is based on cognitive intercultural awareness. So cognitive concepts expressed in verbal symbols feature a particular clear-cut universalistic propensity: deep, complex semantic relations between words involving not only the student but teacher as well in self-organizing and self-cognizing process that proves so challenging.

The self-organizing power of cognitive concept is the essential principle in concept-learning process because every verbal sign is located horizontally on the systematic axes and it is in constant correlation or cognation (analogy) with its corresponding highest point on the paradigmatic axis vertically; thus this may be represented as a pyramidal self-organized chart, the vertex of which designates the cognitive concept - dominant archy seme. Cognitive concepts may be grouped in various ways and later designated and used in common vernacular quite differently between languages and cultural groups. However, not only to language characteristics but to pragmatic and cultural factors as well, they are closely related. Consequently, the principles involved in self-organizing concepts give rise to singularity and exclusivity, hence to freedom of an individual. Collectively the concept continuously attempts to maintain the stated standard that corresponds to the highest point on the vertical axis.

In conclusion, cognitive concept learning is best described as access to global knowledge and to cultural awareness, which in turn meets the double challenge of change in behavior head on. Thus teaching culture-specific differences introduces learners to the new way of cognizing reality, pushing forward a new culture.

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